

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Little Snake Field Office  
455 Emerson Street  
Craig, CO 81625-1129

## Section 390

# Categorical Exclusions for Oil and Gas Development

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2014-0002-CX(390)

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COD033622A

PROJECT NAME: Iles Dome Unit Well #14 Final Reclamation

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: SWSE, sec. 22, T.4 N., R. 92 W., 6<sup>th</sup> PM. Moffat County, Colorado

APPLICANT: POC-I, LLC

LAND USE PLAN (LUP) CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action was reviewed for conformance (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM MS 1601.03) with the following plan:

Name of Plan: Little Snake Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved: October 2011

Decision Language: The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP goals, objectives, and management decisions: language of decision in RMP that allows this type of implementation action e.g.:

Allow for the availability of the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas) for exploration and development. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify and make available the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas) for exploration and development.
- Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of oil and gas resources (including coalbed natural gas).

Section/Page: Section 2.13 Energy and Minerals/ page RMP-36

REVIEW OF EXISTING NEPA DOCUMENTS:

Name of Document: None.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:** POC-I, LLC has submitted a sundry notice requesting approval to reclaim a plugged well location during the fall of 2013. The Iles Dome Unit Well #14 was drilled in 1926 and was plugged in 2013. The operator has submitted a plan to remove all the surface equipment and to recontour and seed the area of disturbance, approximately 0.5 ac. The access road will remain in place, as it provides access to Iles Dome Unit #26. Erosion control measures will be installed as needed and the location will be monitored for noxious weeds. The following seed mix will be used:

| Seed Mix # | Species               | Lbs. PLS/acre | Range Sites   |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|
| 1          | Western wheatgrass    | 3             | Alkaline Slopes, Clayey Foothills, Clayey Slopes, Claypan, Mountain Shale, Shallow Slopes, Loamy 9-11 |
|            | Streambank wheatgrass | 2             |   |
|            | Thickspike wheatgrass | 2             |   |
|            | Indian ricegrass      | 1             |   |
|            | Hood's phlox          | 1             |   |
|            | Scarlet globemallow   | 0.5           |   |
|            | Cicer milkvetch       | 1             |   |
|            | Fourwing saltbush     | 2             |   |
|            | Nuttall's saltbush    | 1             |   |
|            | Winterfat             | 1             |   |

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW:** The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation in accordance with statutory NEPA categorical exclusions (CX), as granted in Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, for oil and gas exploration and development. The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under Section 390, based on the qualifying criteria Number 5 of the categories listed below.

| Qualifying Criteria  | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Individual surface disturbances of less than five (5) acres so long as the total surface disturbance on the lease is not greater than 150 acres and site-specific analysis in a document prepared pursuant to NEPA has been previously completed. <b>(a, b, and c below must be yes to have this CX to apply)</b> |     |    |
| a. Will disturb less than 5 acres, if more than one action is proposed for a lease, each activity is counted separately and each may disturb up to five acres.   |     |    |
| b. The current un-reclaimed surface disturbance readily visible on the entire leasehold is not greater than 150 acres, including the proposed action.  |     |    |
| c. This categorical exclusion includes the requirement of a site-specific NEPA document. A site specific NEPA analysis can be either an exploration and/or development EA/EIS, an EA/EIS for a specific POD, a multi-well EA/EIS or an individual permit approval EA/EIS.  |     |    |

| Qualifying Criteria   | YES      | NO |
|---|----------|----|
| 2. Drilling an oil and gas location or well pad at a site at which drilling has occurred within five (5) years prior to the date of spudding the well and the specific location and/or well pad site for the proposed drilling is adequately analyzed in an existing activity-level or project-level EIS or EA.   |          |    |
| 3. Drilling an oil or gas well within a developed field for which an approved land use plan and an existing activity-level or project-specific EIS or EA exists, so long as such plan or document was approved within five (5) years prior to the date of spudding the well.  |          |    |
| a. The proposed APD is within a developed oil or gas field. A developed field is defined as any field in which a confirmation well has been completed.  |          |    |
| b. The developed field in which the proposed drilling will take place is adequately analyzed in an existing activity-level or project-specific EIS or EA (not solely in an approved land use plan and associated EIS).  |          |    |
| c. The existing NEPA document was finalized or supplemented within five years of spudding the well.   |          |    |
| 4. Placement of a pipeline in an approved right-of-way corridor, as long as the corridor was approved within five (5) years prior to the date of placement of the pipeline. (The right-of-way must contain a stipulated deadline that provides for the suspension of the authorization if placement does not begin before the last date that the CX is available, at which time the grant holder would be required to obtain a new right-of-way.) |          |    |
| a. The placement of a pipeline in an existing corridor of any type  |          |    |
| b. Placement of the pipeline within five years of approval (or amendment) of the most recent date of a decision (NEPA or permit authorization) are the only two applicable factors for review pursuant to this statute and must both be satisfied to use this CX.   |          |    |
| 5. Maintenance of a minor activity, other than any construction or major renovation of a building or facility.  | <b>X</b> |    |

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:**

| Title               | Resource                 | Date       |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Archaeologist       | Cultural Resources       | 10/29/13   |
| Rangeland Mgmt Spec | Sensitive and T&E Plants | 11/01/2013 |
| Wildlife Biologist  | T&E Animals              | 10/29/13   |

The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the Little Snake Field Office interdisciplinary team on 10/28/13.

A list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the Little Snake Field Office.

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Concerns: The area of potential effect (APE) was subject to a cultural resources assessment as reported in the following:

Rintoul, Naomi  
2013 *POC-I LLC: A Class III Survey for the Iles Dome #14 Well Location Reclamation in Moffat County, Colorado*. OAHF #MF.LM.R1043; BLM-LSFO #54.1.2013. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Grand Junction, Colorado.

As a result of the assessment, no National Register-eligible cultural resources (i.e., historic properties) were identified within the current project area. The undertaking may proceed with an effect determination of “*no historic properties affected*.” Additionally, there are no known items, sites, or landscapes determined as culturally significant to Native American tribes within or adjacent to the current project area. The proposed action does not prevent access to any known sacred sites, prevent the possession of sacred objects, or interfere with the performance of traditional ceremonies and/or rituals.

Standard operating and reporting procedures for unanticipated discoveries of cultural and/or paleontological materials apply.

NAME OF PREPARER: /s/ Shawn Wiser

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:

**DECISION AND RATIONALE:** I have reviewed this CX and have decided to approve the proposed action.

This action is listed in the Instruction Memorandum Number 2005-247 and Instruction Memorandum Number 2010-118 as an action that may be categorically excluded under Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. I have evaluated the action relative to the 5 qualifying criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:** /s/ Timothy Wilson, for  
Wendy Reynolds, Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:** 11/05/13

#### Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is effective upon the date the decision or approval by the authorized officer. Under regulations addressed in 43 CFR Subpart 3165, any party adversely affected has the right to appeal this decision. An informal review of the technical or procedural aspects of the decision may be requested of this office before initiating a formal review request. You have the right to request a State Director review of this decision. You must request a State Director review prior to filing an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) (43CFR 3165.4).

If you elect to request a State Director Review, the request must be received by the BLM Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215, no later than 20 business days after the date the decision was received or considered to have been received. The request must include all supporting documentation unless a request is made for an extension of the filing of supporting documentation. For good cause, such extensions may be granted. You also have the right to appeal the decision issued by the State Director to the IBLA.

#### Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Shawn Wiser, Natural Resource Specialist, Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson Street, Craig, CO 81625, Phone (970) 826-5086.